

REMARKS

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the rejections in the Office Action dated October 19, 2006, new claims 17-20 have been added. Entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims pending herein are respectfully requested in view of the remarks below. Claims 1-20 are now pending.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the time granted its undersigned representative on January 19, 2007 in which the Office Action was discussed.

§ 102 Rejections:

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 00/07863 of which Hilberer (U.S. Patent No. 6,540,308) is the English equivalent.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a supplementary air outlet for directly providing compressed air at a variable control pressure to an actuator or actuators of a parking brake system. A supplementary set of electropneumatic components are associated with, and upstream of, the supplementary air outlet, which set receives compressed air at a supply pressure and applies the variable control pressure to the compressed air to selectively fully operate the actuator or actuators. An operating means is incorporated into an electronic command and control unit to operate the supplementary set of electropneumatic components whereby full operation of the actuator or actuators of the parking brake system is directly controlled by the device rather than by a dispersed pressure control components.

The Electronic Compressed-Air Processing System of Hilberer neither includes the above-described features nor provides the numerous benefits of the present invention. The compressed-air system of this reference has, “in a housing, an electromechanical pressure regulator, preferably an air dryer cartridge, and a multicircuit safety valve having at least one load circuit connected to it. Each load circuit can be locked separately by means of an assigned pressure control unit”. (Column 1, lines 7-12 of Hilberer, emphasis added.)

As illustrated in Figures 1 & 3 of the reference, the multicircuit safely valve M has a plurality of pressure control units, 6, 7, 8, 9 which each provide supply pressure to an assigned supply circuit K1, K2, K3, K4 and FBA. “Circuits K1 and K2 are used for the compressed-air supply of service brake circuits, which are not shown in detail, and comprise, for example, compressed-air storage tanks and other customary components. The parking brake system FBA is connected, for example, to circuit K3, while circuit K4 is provided for the connection of accessories.” (Column 6, lines 1-13 of Hilberer, emphasis added.)

The compressed-air processing system of the applied reference is designed and employed to provide compressed air at a supply pressure to the various pneumatic circuits of the vehicle. There is no teaching or suggestion in this reference of using the compressed-air processing system to directly and fully operate the actuator or actuators of the circuits, exclusive of any dispersed pressure control component. In fact, the reference teaches away from the present invention by teaching that the compressed-air processing system is used to “charge” the individual circuits (column 2, lines 46 & 49; column 3, line 4 of Hilberer), and that such circuits include compressed-air storage tanks and “other customary components”. (Column 6, line 11 of Hilberer.)

In the Response to Arguments section of the Office Action, it is alleged that column 10, lines 8-10 of Hilberer discloses the venting of a parking brake which would teach the full operation of the parking brake recited in claim 1. Column 9, line 65 to column 10, line 12 discloses an air bleed valve which prevents pressurized air from being fed to a parking brake before the pressure in circuits K1 and K2 (i.e., the main service brakes) has reached a working pressure level. The air bleed valve therefore has a function of preventing a release of the parking brake (by avoiding the pressurization of such brake) before the pressure in the main circuit has reached the necessary pressure to allow the proper functioning of the main service brakes. There is no indication in the reference that this valve could be used to depressurize the parking brake after it has been deactivated (i.e., pressurized), and instead the valve is used to prevent the pressurization of the parking brake system. Lines 9-10 of column 10 describe that the air bleeding valve is a pressure controlled valve and does not disclose the valve being controlled by an electronic command and control unit. When the pressure is low, the air bleed valve is opened to the atmosphere, and when the control pressure is high the air bleed valve is closed preventing

any exhaust therethrough. Accordingly, when there is pressure in circuits K1 or K2, the bleed valve cannot open, and so as long as the service brakes are operative the parking brake could not be operated by using such air bleed valve as alleged. Thus, this reference does not identically disclose a unitary device fully and directly controlling a parking brake system due at least to the lack of control over the activation (i.e., depressurization) of the parking brake system by such a unitary device.

Accordingly, because all the features (e.g., a supplementary set of electropneumatic components associated with and upstream of the supplementary air outlet which applies a variable control pressure to compressed air to selectively fully operate an actuator or actuators of a parking brake system and operating means incorporated into an electronic command and control unit to operate the supplementary set of electropneumatic components whereby full operation of the actuator or actuators of the parking brake system is directly controlled by the device rather than by a dispersed pressure control component) of claim 1 of the present application are not identically disclosed by Hilberer, this claim cannot be anticipated thereby. The dependent claims are believed not to be anticipated for the same reasons and for their own additional features.

As indicated, the unitary device of the present invention includes operating means of a command and control unit which control electropneumatic components for selectively fully operating an actuator or actuators of a parking brake system. Such full operation includes the pressurization of the parking brake system to deactivate the parking brake and the depressurization of such system to activate the parking brake. As described above, the air bleed valve described in columns 9-10 prevents pressurization of the parking brake disclosed therein until the service brakes are fully operative. The air bleed valve closes when the pressure builds to allow the service brakes to function. The bleed valve could not allow exhausting of the parking brake as long as the service brakes are operative. In contrast, the parking brake of the present invention is controlled by a unitary device such that it could be activated even while the service brakes are functional. Further, the air bleed valve disclosed in Hilberer is a pressure control valve in contrast to the use of the electronic command and control unit that is part of the "unitary device" and is not controlled merely by pressure. Thus, there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Hilberer of the features of the present application which allow the full and direct

control of a parking brake system by a unitary device which includes an electronic command and control unit for controlling such full operation of the actuator or actuators of the parking brake system.

New Claims:

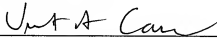
Claims 17-20 have been added. Support for these claims can be found in the specification and drawings and no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 17-18 are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as their base independent claim and for their own additional features. Claims 19-20 are believed to be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1 described above and for their own additional features.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at the telephone number provided.

Respectfully submitted,



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